

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) In a computer system including a host computer, a disk drive host interface and a disk drive having a disk storage medium with a first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations, a method for installing a mailbox file associated with the disk storage medium, the installation method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a disk drive access key from an access key server, the access key being generated by the access key server as a function of an identifying characteristic of the disk drive;

creating a mailbox file in the first range of addressable locations using the access key obtained from the access key server; and

notifying the disk drive of a location of the mailbox file in the first range of addressable locations, wherein the disk drive can perform a function characterized by contents of the mailbox file.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the function is used to access a second range of addressable locations that are not disk drive host interface addressable and that are contained on the disk storage medium.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2, wherein the access key is required for an application program to access the second range of addressable locations via the mailbox file.

4. (New) In a computer system including a host computer, a disk drive host interface and a disk drive having a disk controller, a method for accessing a mailbox file associated with a first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations, the method comprising the steps of:

recognizing a command from a host operating system in reference to the mailbox file associated with the first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations; and

responding to the command by performing within the disk controller an executable function characterized by the contents of the mailbox file.

5. (New) A method according to claim 4, wherein the first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations refers to a storage space allocated in at least one of a disk storage medium and a computer memory associated with the disk controller.

6. (New) A method according to claim 4, wherein the mailbox file contains encrypted information.